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The Great Mother Goddess Mo (or *Ma*; *Do-Ma*). Proto-Indo-European Aryan Homeland of the Great Mother Goddess: The Neolithic village of Tumba Madžari in Skopje, Macedonia



2013

Contents:

Introduction	5
The Neolithic village of Tumba Madžari in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia	6
The Cult of the Great Mother Goddess	10
The Great Mother Goddess altar	18
The Great Mother Goddess historical artifacts	27
References	32

Introduction - The immemorial timeworn creation myths of the world, of the Supreme Creator-God of the Sky, the Great Mother-Goddess of the Earth, the birth of the young Sun-God, myths of the Moon that gets to the earth and turns into a cow, conception of the months as divine creatures, etc., gave us the notion of the beginning of the time, the emergence of the order from the chaos. These primordial beliefs have the central role in each nation collective conscience. In that unknown early epoch, when the antediluvian ancestors of the Macedonians were still one with the mythological *Pelasgians*, *Boreans* and *Hyperboreans*, they were worshipers of the primordial gods of nature, animals and woods, members of the ancient Aryan Pantheon. These primordial myths that have deep roots that stretch out to the prehistoric times, have survived numerous conquerors and influences of various religions, showing sturdy vitality, which is engraved deeply into the subconscious collective memory and traditions of the people. They have nothing in common with the modern day religions, such as the Christianity or Judaism, but they are rather based in the phylogenetic archetypes which are same in all cultures. Indigenism (Continuity Theory) proved beyond any doubt that these strong primordial myths were transmitted throughout millennia.

The Neolithic Village of Tumba Madžari in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

According to C-14 and Dendrochronological analysis carried out in Macedonia and in the neighboring modern countries, and by comparative analyses, the time frame of the Neolithic era in these prehistoric settlements has been set in two horizons - from 7000 till 5000 BCE (that's 9000-7000 years ago), and of the Eneolithic from 5000 till 2500 BCE (or 7000-4500 years ago). The autochthonous Aryan nature of these people was undoubtedly confirmed by the recent Genetic researches. Geneticists, studying the human DNA note that a Y-Chromosome genetic marker which they named, according to Y Chromosome Consortium, Haplogroup R1a1 (HG3 according to Rosser 2000 nomenclature) is the most common among the Macedonian populations in Europe and Indo-Aryans in India, at 47% and 30% respectively. If we do the math, using the published statistics, we see that in Europe 61 million Macedonian speaking males have this genetic marker, but on the Indian sub-continent, the number is almost four times higher, at 240 million males.

Some may argue that this genetic and linguistic affinity is due to the more recent arrival of the Vedic Aryans from India into Central Europe, Eastern Europe and to the Macedonian peninsula. However, such a recent migration from the Southeast Asia, would have also picked up and brought a Finno-Ugric genetic marker Haplogroup N3 (HG16 of Rosser's nomenclature) to the Macedonian peninsula, since it is widely distributed in Russia and Ukraine - between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea (Rosser et al. 2000). But that's not the case. Hg N3 genetic marker has not been found either south of the Carpathian Mountains, central Europe, nor in the Macedonian Peninsula. More than 20,000 years old Paleolithic Haplgroup Hg I genetic marker was found instead. The highest frequencies of this even older gene have been found in the Macedonian peninsula, and is a likely signature of a prehistoric population flourishing after the Last Glacial Maximum (Marjanović et al. 2005, Perićić et al. 2005). This indicates that the Macedonian populations carrying the Hg R1a1 have been present in the Macedonian Peninsula from at least 10,000 years ago, long before the Finno-Ugric population spread into Northeastern Europe, Russia and Ukraine.

On the grounds of an overall chronological analysis, as elsewhere, in Macedonia have been identified three stages of the Neolithic Era, classified as: Early, Middle and Late Neolithic Ages. They are in relation with the cultural horizons in the Macedonian Peninsula at large, above all with the first Balkan-Anatolian agricultural communities, rather than with the later Starčevo, i.e. Vinča-Tordoš compounds and the compounds at Karanovo, Proto-Sesklo, Sesklo and Dimini. Each of the mentioned cultural compounds has been classified as later Neolithic sub-groups, according to

their specific development of stylistic features and chronological definitions.



Tumba Madžari (Macedonian Cyrillic: Тумба Маџари) was a prehistoric settlement from the 7th millennium BCE, located in the north-eastern part of Skopje, in Republic of Macedonia, and it is one of the most significant and also one of the oldest Neolithic settlements along the river Vardar basin. The Neolithic settlement at Tumba Madžari represents the most ancient known protogenic core of today's capital of Macedonia, posing the city of Skopje¹ among the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world, with 9000 years long history. It is also one of the very first known permanent urban sites with a sanctuary in the human history and Europe. The historian H. A. Lamb explicitly and unequivocally says: "*Macedonia is the place where the first agricultural village in Europe was founded, which dates from around 6620 BCE ... The conditions for creating there were especially pronounced thanks to the authentic and one of a kind people. Because of this it is a place of numerous and homogeneous kingdoms.*"²

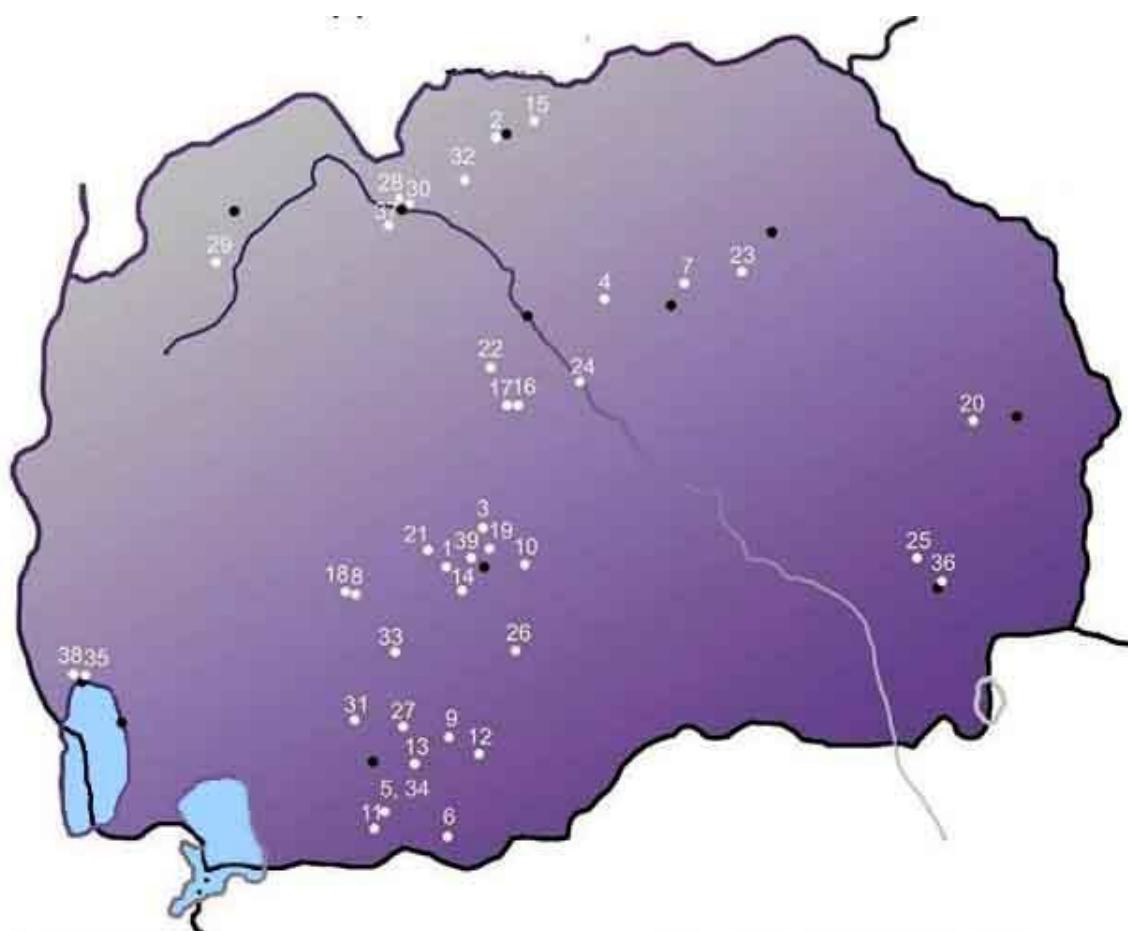
¹ Other older names: *Skuopoi / Skupi, Justiniana Prima, Skopis*.

² Harold A. Lamb, "Alexander of Macedon" (1924)

The first archaeological excavations of this site were conducted in 1978 by the Museum of Macedonia, under the leadership of V. Sanev. Archeological findings at the prehistoric settlement Tumba Madžari are astonishing evidence of material and spiritual life and high artistic and aesthetic achievements of the Neolithic humans from Macedonia, taking place in the period spanning between year 6500 and 4300 BCE. The geographic position, the fertile ground for agriculture and stockbreeding, and the major north-south route, have been appealing to many well-known and unknown tribes and people who settled here for a shorter or longer period of time. The traces of the prehistoric culture in R. of Macedonia (of which Lepenski Vir is later branch) dates as far back as 8000 BCE, and precedes the one of Vinča for 1000 or more years. Other Neolithic sites from this cultural horizon, the *Tumba* near the village of Dolno Palčište (1987/88.), and *Tumba* near the village of Stenče (2000) are the far oldest traces of life in the Polog valley (Tetovo and Gostivar region in northwestern Macedonia), and are also dated some 8 millenniums or more ago, specifically since the year 6100 BCE. From those sites came a large number of excavated fragments, several fully preserved items of pottery, and also sacrificial cult plastic and statuettes dedicated to the female cult. This female fertility worship was rooted deep in the most primordial communities of the first Homo Sapiens. According to all the artifacts found by now the Great Mother Goddess cult of earthly procreation was older than the humanity itself.

The specific prehistoric settlement of Tumba Madžari is located in the area between contemporary urban settlements Madžari 2 and Čento, about 700 meters on the left from the highway Skopje–Kumanovo–Veles (E-75). It is a low hill, some 220 m long and 3 m high mound. Although it was used for agricultural purposes (until the earthquake of 1963), it was somewhat impressive. Along with the settlement and the uncontrollable building of new houses, a new environment was created where the mound was left unnoticeable. It has been archaeologically proved that the remains of a multifaceted settlement, with a 3-meter layer, denote the 3 stages of life and belong to the Anzabegovo-Vršnik cultural group (II-IV). An area of 1400 m² has been explored in which ruins and 7 facilities (six dwellings and a sanctuary) have been discovered. All facilities were built with rectangular and square shapes with walls consisting of massive timber and mud. From these findings a Neolithic village was recreated, and now it can be seen in the sensational archaeological park. Remains of fireplaces and numerous items of material culture have been found in every facility. The ceramic pots depicting a broad typology of shapes and decorative motifs performed with barbotine, impresso and bichromate painting techniques (brown on red background) are certainly the most common. In regards to ornamentation, a certain symbolism (rain, wheat spikes, grain, water) and animal forms of the “askos” vessels, associated with the everyday life of the Neolithic man is portrayed in the

majority of pottery (in addition to technological and aesthetic values of art). The cult plastic is also quite significant, especially the anthropomorphic one, which artistically is still free of old traditional patterns. The terracotta figurines were made by hand, almost regularly of well purified clay. After being modeled, they were baked at high temperature from 900 to 1000 C°. Larger figurines, askoses or altars were molded on wooden supports, which served as a carrier for holding the heavy clay applied. These supports must have been burnt in the process of baking, but there are visible imprints of them on the inside of these figurines. Decorations on the bodies were made either by applying ornaments of clay, or by carving with sharp tools.



Above: the map of finding sites of the Great Mother Goddess altars and figurines in Republic of Macedonia

The Cult of the Great Mother Goddess

The Great Mother Goddess (protector of fertility and vegetation) is presented among the Neolithic cultures of the central Macedonian peninsula in a yet unknown way for the Stone Age period. Symbolized as a matron of the temple, protector of the house and family, and a feeding mother with divine functions she is presented in the form of anthropomorphic house, shaped in a female figure that rises from the roof, and is identified as a protector of the house and the family.

The previous "Stone Age Venuses" which represented the 1st stage, one of promiscuity and immorality, were generally fertility "fetishes", magical objects to ensure birth and they bear no clear markers of divinity. At most, they were anthropomorphic images of local deities or half-deities rather than a universal goddesses.



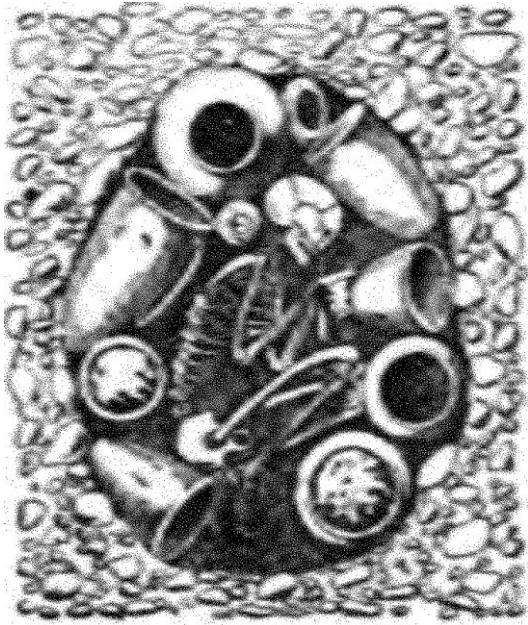
Above: **early Neolithic goddess figurine from the prehistoric palisade-settlement on the banks of the river Drim near Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia**

The 2nd stage, "Matrilineal", was the visceral realm of an earth mother, one of whose primary concerns was fertility. It is the period of the discovery and the invention of farming, when the primordial society in prehistoric Macedonia changes dramatically. The phenomenon of agriculture overthrew the Paleolithic indelicate male domination based on mere brutal force. The female fertility worship took over and gave the rise of these 'seedfarers' through new cultural forms in means of instinctual and spiritual guide. In the matrilineal prehistory society was centered around women, with their mysterious life-giving powers, and they were honored as incarnations and priestesses of the Great Mother Goddess. This new cult of earthly procreation in no way can be interpreted as 'masculine'. During the emergence of the feminist matrilineal cult, men and women lived together peacefully. It is not that the male population did something wrong to lose its Paleolithic supremacy, but, as the man lacks the womb which gives the birth (like the earth does) the worship of the Great Mother Goddess in Macedonia became the self-evident and indubitable overwhelming new credo of the emerging agricultural Proto-Indo-Europeans. In her various appearances she was directly related with the earth and fertility, as the result of what these new Neolithic farmers learned to do and relied upon in order to survive.

Numerous Neolithic graves and burials with the remains of the deceased in a fetus-like crouched position is yet another aspect of this waste spread credo, but quite contradictory to the idea of the earth as the most probable and comparable reign of her fertility. The Earthly Mother Goddess, who symbolizes that fertile soil that gives a birth and life to all the creatures, vice versa, was in the same time the one who takes it back. Thus the sepulchral underground rite, that developed in the meantime, became her dominion too. Inevitably, the sum of her earthly attributes brought her into close connection with the underworld, and the notion of 'afterlife' was invented too. And as the earth was her element par excellence, she was automatically put in charge of the chthonic traditions and respective sanctuaries (e.g. the goddess *Demetra*). Burials from that epoch, with the remains of the deceased customized in a fetus-like position, and numerous personal and utility objects that began to accompany the dead, show precisely that – the appearance of this new abstract credence among the primitive peoples, the 'afterlife', in the eternal 'afterworld' somewhere below (or up above in the heaven). This also meant that the earth (beside the sky)³ was referred to with both the abstract functions of universal 'womb' and 'tomb' – in direct congruency to the seeds and plants

³ Long before the people learned how to burry their dead the concept of heaven was the afterlife location par excellence, and was related to the nutritional habits of the vultures. Giving the corpses of the deceased to the vultures as sepulchral rite (called "Jhator") is still practiced in China and Tibet, and was common funeral practice among the Indians in India and "Indians" of the new world, until the arrival of the European invaders. See more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sky_burial

that grow back to life from the earth, and all the dead things that decay back to earth.



Above: a fetus-like burial pits from the Stone Age

As a chthonic deity the totem-animals of the Great Mother Goddess were per excellence all those animals that are closely related to the earth/ground. And one of these is the Snake, as one of the creatures that crawls, and is in the most direct connection with earth. The Macedonian term for Snake - “Zmiya” in plain Macedonian, is rather self-explanatory and directly and etymologically related to the Macedonian word for ‘earth’ - “Zemya”⁴. Accordingly, right on the eve of Mother Goddess birthday, on 23rd March, in today Republic of Macedonia there’s still the archaic tradition of “Mladenci”⁵ day, when this strange primordial chthonic usance is still observed – people leaving parts of their clothes in the places where the snakes dwell, so the snakes can pass over their clothes. This incredible (for the bare fact that is still practiced) ritual is considered as a good omen and blessing of the fertility.

⁴ https://recnik.off.net.mk/recnik/makedonski-angliski/%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BC%D1%98%D0%B0*

⁵ ‘Youngsters’ in plain Macedonian.



Above: **Macedonian chthonic Snake-ritual observance on the night between the 23rd and 24th of March, the ancient birthday of the Great Mother Goddess**

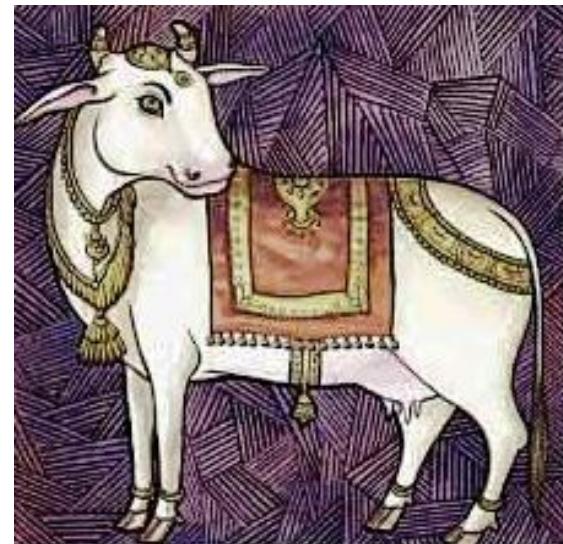
In Egypt the Hyeroglyphic symbol of Mother Goddess was the Vulture, representing the letter 'A'. And again, the role of the vulture as a chthonic creature of the underworld was in relation with the earthly goddess. As '*Meretseger*' she was a chthonic goddess associated with the underworld, and generally depicted as a coiled cobra, which may possess a human head and arm.

In Macedonian Glagolitic script the first letter 'A' is again symbol of her, and unmistakable copy of the Great Mother Goddess altars with the indistinctively same form.



Above: Glagolic letter "A" (also "1st" and/or number 1) clearly resembles the 'She-1st one', i.e. the neolithic Great Mother Goddess, in her typical calm posture as the mistresss of the house

The sacred cow (*Zemun*) and the pig, perhaps on account of her abundant fecundity, were other sacred animals of the earth goddess, whether she was known as *Demetra*⁶, *Kibela*, *Astarte*, *Ceres*, or by any other name.



Right: the sacred cow **Zemun**

⁶ Latin “*Demeter*” is composed from 3 words: ‘*Dea*’ - goddess; ‘*Ma*’ - mother, and ‘*terra*’ - earth.



Above: Enthroned Demetra holding staff and stalks of wheat and Persephone with torches. 5th century BCE

As unnamed "*Grain Mistress*", underlining her earthly "power and favor", she was the goddess of seeds, grain and rebirth. Thus the ritual milling and production of bread was usual thing for sanctuaries, and probably the mills and granaries were her sanctuaries at the same time. The Supreme Mother Goddess was *procreatrice* of the life, mistress of the nature, goddess of the life and death cycle, mother of all the other gods and people, queen of the forests, plants and animals, etc. In the later historical

times, various Mother Goddesses (*Innana-Ishtar/Astarte, Anat and Asherah, Kubaba/Cybebe/Cybele/Kibela/Kupalo*⁷, *Isis, Demetra, Uni/Juno, Magna Mater*, etc.) wielded immense power too, but in a male-dominated pantheons.



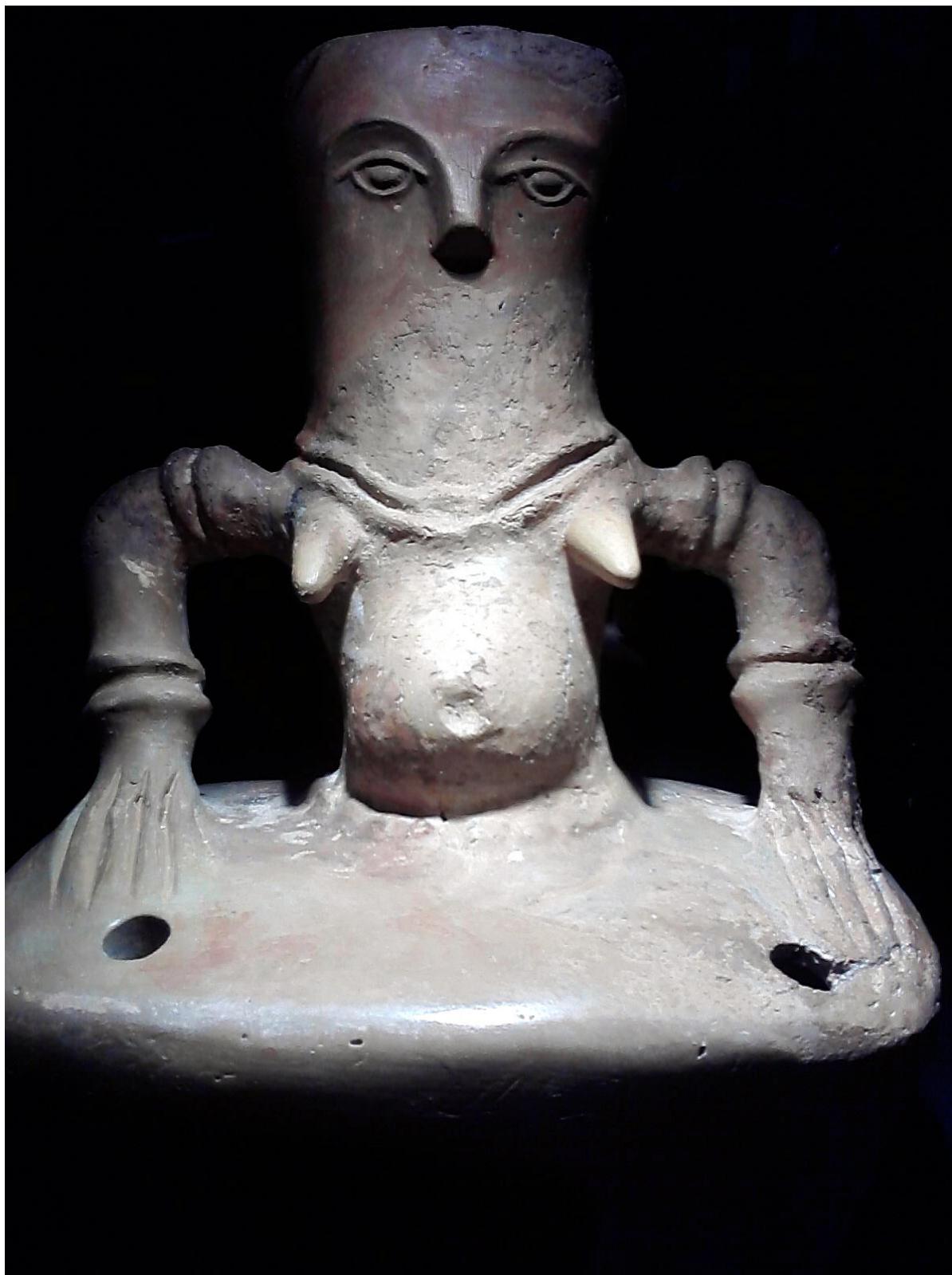
These goddesses were integral to the fertility and prosperity of their land, but usually only in conjunction with one or more male deities, into a male-dominated, polytheistic cultures that worshipped both male and female deities. They were definitely not the only or even principal deities in such cultures, nor can we speak of "goddess religions"

⁷ In yet unexplained way this was also the name for a female horse -

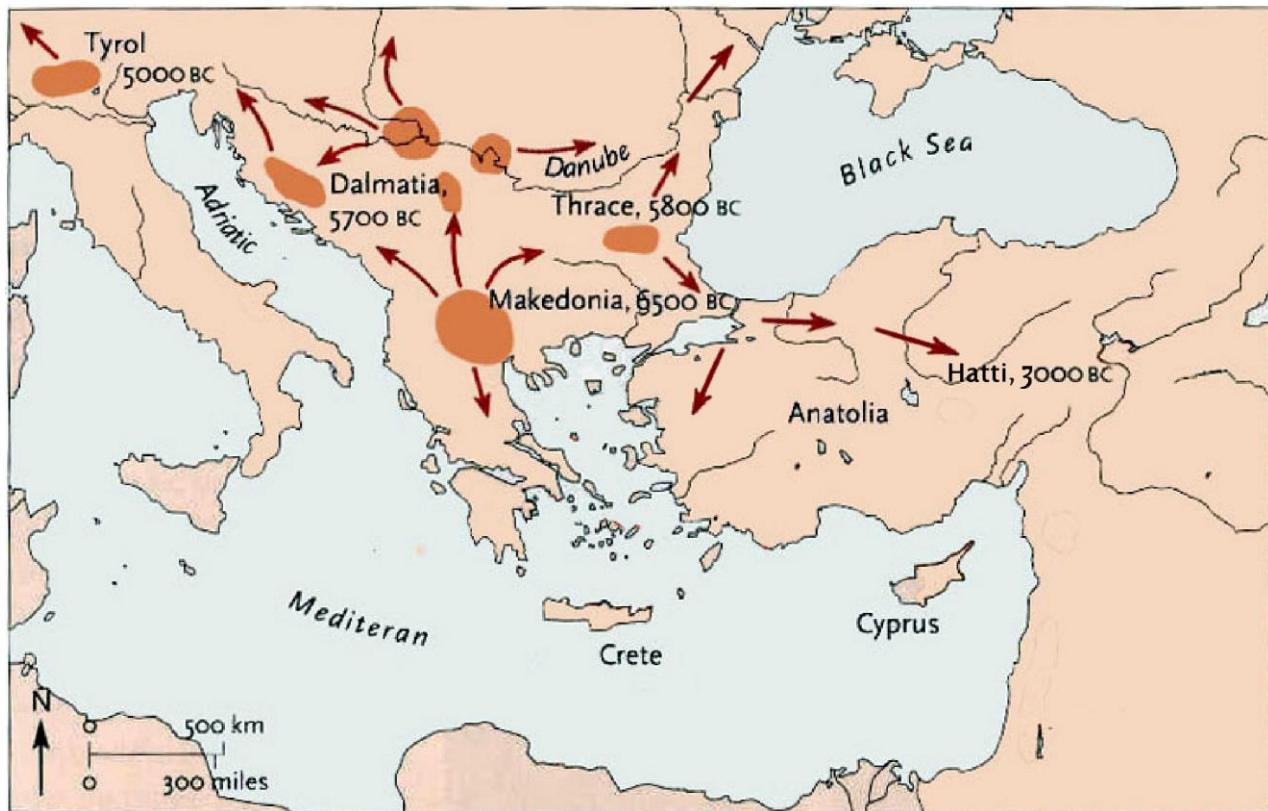
or "goddess cultures", they existed in more ancient times. Goddesses received worship as part of a fertility ritual, though the focus of the rite was normally on their male consort. Nevertheless, chthonic sanctuaries dedicated only to goddesses like *Demetra* were widespread, in conjunction of their male comparisons.

The Mother Goddess of Tumba Madžari, on contrary of the Stone Age Venusses, or historical times Mother Goddesses, is the first exclusively female divinity cult, universal bearer of the undisputed supreme-feminine protective and fertility power in the widely contested matriarchate society. The discovered sanctuary in Tumba Madžari was dedicated solely to her and to her only, no other divinities notion was found close to her altar. The Mother Goddess of these proto-Macedonic prehistoric settlements is a symbol with narrative iconography, enriched with paleo-ethnographic details. Her sanctuary in Tumba Madžari, lifted on wooden piles, was used for performing offering rituals and adoration. In the ceremonial chalices and other pottery around the places of her worship clay tokens, offerings, and remains of grain, or even tiny clay-objects shaped as grain were found regularly. The Great Mother Goddess cult objects of the same type has been discovered in the regions of Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo and Ovče Pole, as well as in Pelagonia. This should certainly be taken into consideration, since it indicates mutual contacts of the population from these areas, showing that they worshiped the same god(s) and shared the same beliefs. Also, other particularity of the goddess-figurines, that are all of strikingly similar type, were confined to a specific area. Namely, the altars of the Great Mother Goddess as the mistresss of the house have so far been discovered only in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Great Mother Goddess Altar



The Pre-Indo-European earliest Neolithic altars of the Great Mother from **Tumba Madžari** are over 8500 years old. Thus the specific cult of the Great Mother Goddess from Macedonia is probably one of the oldest of all known religions related to anthropomorphic gods. It is a part of the phylogenetic archetypes of the most ancient cultures. Indigenism (Continuity Theory) proved that these strong primordial myths were regularly transmitted throughout millennia. It was the time of matriarchate in the agricultural settlements of the Macedonian Peninsula and wider Mediterranean area, and was associated with the principles of fertility, birth, and creation. The population density was growing, probably also as the result of her worshiping. About the 5th millennium BCE it tripled or quadrupled, provoking movements and spreading of the agricultural Proto-Indo-Europeans. Their further expansion through time and space is proven by the development of the subsequent farming cultures along Danube (*Lepenski Vir, Starčevo-Vinča-Tordos* 5000 BCE), toward Moldavia-Ukraine (*Cucuteni-Tripolje* culture 4000 BCE), mixing with the agricultural Proto-Indo-Europeans in Asia Minor (aas of 3000 BCE), and further toward central Europe (*Halstatt* and *La Téne* culture 2000 BCE), etc.



There was no personal property, people lived in collectives, maybe the first larger than horde communities. The land was around the village and everybody worked there, and the surplus was kept in the rooms for storage in the temples. The religion included collective property, thus the Mother Goddess was protector of the wellness,

home, and family. The Neolithic Art was prevalently 'Feminine', on the difference from Paleolithic 'Masculine' culture of hunter-gatherers who worshiped animalistic cults and deities.

What made the site of Tumba Madžari and other Neolithic sites in R. of Macedonia widely known is the discovery, for the first time, of a clay depiction of the Great Mother Goddess with the classic calm posture of the goddess emerging from the top of a house, thus implying protection of its core by reflecting harmony and peace.



Above: the exceptional moment of discovery of one of the Great Mother Goddess altars in Tumba Madžari. Photographed as it

appeared after more than 8500 years spent under the ground

Such a representation of the Great Mother Goddess, as one with the dwelling place, was also a result of the appearance of this new environment in agricultural settlements – the **house**, i.e. **home**. According to the artifacts and data acquired from the archaeological excavations, for the first time in human history it was discovered that the figurines of the Great Mother Goddess have been situated inside the houses, within the first solid-built homes of our ancestors. She had received her holy angle between the four walls, but in the very homes of the common people. The worship, adoration and respect for the women in prehistoric Macedonia were confirmed in almost every house. The altars were laid in areas of the house designed especially for that purpose, forming podiums, pedestals or altar tables, identified as cult places.

Below: **different altars of the Great Mother Goddess from Macedonia:** 1. Tumba Madžari in Skopje; 2. Gjorev Rid, Suvodol; 3. Anzabegovo-Vršnik; 4. and 5. Porodin, near Bitola; 6. Govrlevo, near Skopje; 7. village of Dobromiri (head on the top is missing). As can be seen from the photographs below, they vary in shape and size, some had legs, and some of them instead of lateral holes (i.e. windows and/or doors) had movable roofs, in order to put the offerings for the goddess inside





The innate notion and inseparable primordial imagery that bonds the house with mother changed forever the submissive Paleolithic role of the woman. It gave her the immense importance and transformed her social status in the Neolithic Age communities from fully-dependent member into powerful decisive force of life or

death, procreation or nullity. The first one (life, procreation) is extremely powerful, but gentle-ensuring and almost subconsciously comforting concept of the motherly home, and it cannot be explained better and simpler than through the most basic etymological meaning of the Macedonian word for home – ‘*doma*’: comprised from syllables *Dō* – ‘next-to, close-to’, and *Ma* – ‘mama, mom’.⁸ A one simple word that bonds everyone’s two most dear things of this world – home and mom. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Neolithic objects and altars dedicated to the house-shaped Mother Goddess are found with so persistent frequency all around Macedonia.⁹ With no hesitation we can denominate her the Great Mother Goddess of Home. More precisely – the very first built home(s) in the history of human kind. Furthermore, in addition to this most primordial truth, in Hindi¹⁰ language the word pronounced as “*Makedoniya*” correspondingly means ‘the world of mother’ (hear it by clicking on the loudspeaker icon for Hindi pronunciation on Google Translate).

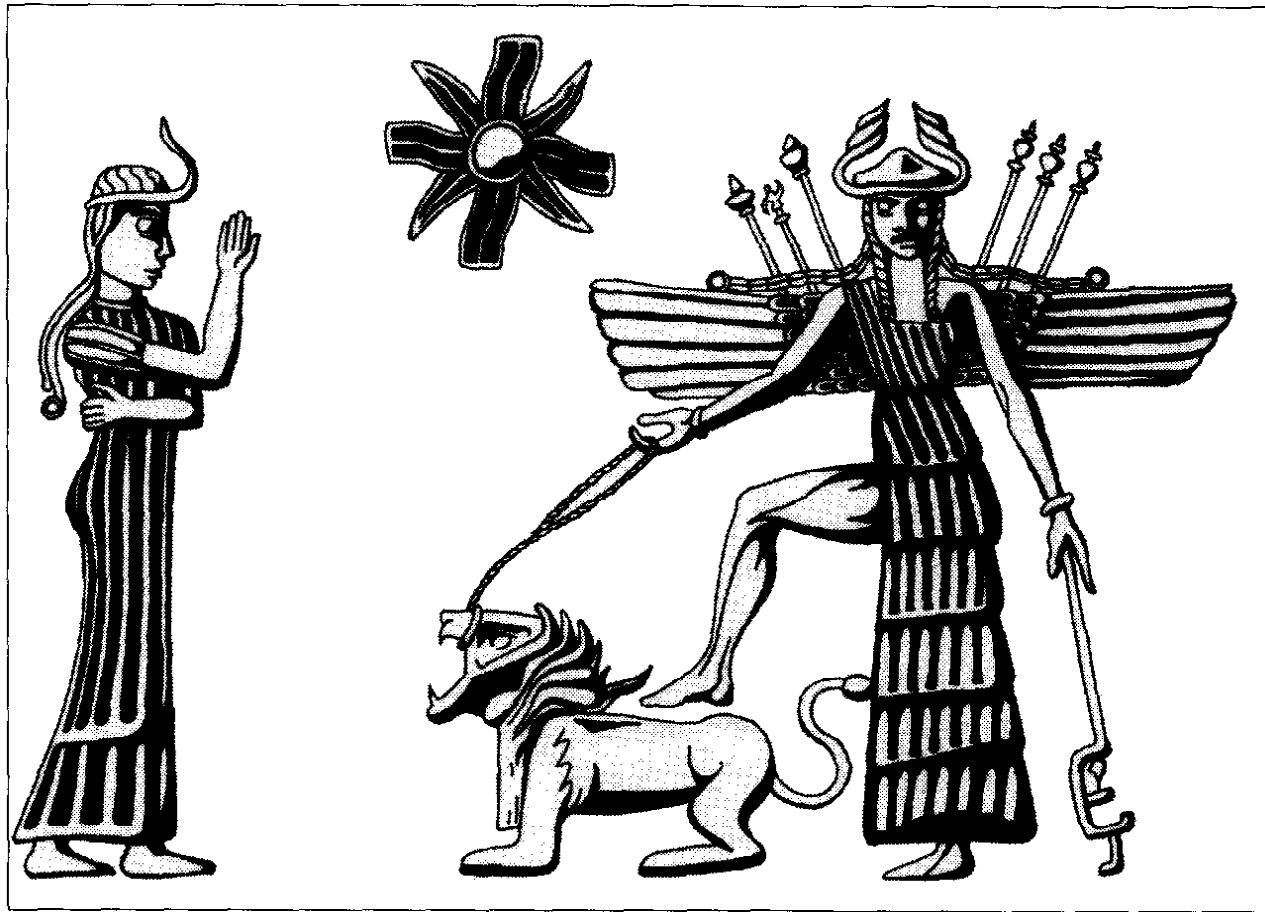
In ancient Macedonia the Neolithic cult of the Great Mother Goddess in the later historic periods and pantheons was utterly transmitted through the Pelasgo-Macedonic *Bryges* and *Paionian* communities, and places of worship spread all around, from Macedonia to (and across) lower Danube, as well as into Asia Minor. Her primordial worship in the archaic times transcended into the cult of *Mother of Gods* and later she appears as Hittite *Kubaba*, Phrygian *Kibela* (lat. *Cybele*), Egyptian *Isis* or *Teshut*,¹¹ Sumerian *Inanna-Ishtar*, Babylonian *Astarte*, Pelasgian *Demetra*, Etruscan *Uni* (i.e. Roman *Juno*, later *Magna Mater Deorum*), etc.

⁸ Eng. *domestic*; from Latin *domus*; from Macedonic *doma* – ‘home’.

⁹ The archaeological sites of Govrlevo, Porodin, Suvodol, Vršnik, etc.

¹⁰ One of the oldest known living languages in the world.

¹¹ Herodotus, II, 60.



Above: Triumphant winged *Inanna-Ishtar*, with foot on her lion, her eight-pointed star symbol above her, king-worshipped by a lesser goddess. **Black stone cylinder seal, Akkadian, 2334-2154 BCE.**

Close examination of the evidence shows that these ancient goddesses were complicated entities with immense powers, realms, and functions just as often pertaining to culture as they are to nature. *Kubaba/Cybele* was the goddess of nature and fertility. She was a goddess of caverns, of the Earth in its primitive state, worshipped on the sources and mountain tops. Her name is supposed to originate from the Mt. Cybele in Asia Minor, where one of her sanctuaries on the hilltop was, but it is also possible that the mountain received its name after the goddess. Known as Empresses Kibela, founder of the City of 'Pillar' - *Stobi*,¹² she had also a throne upstairs in her sanctuary on the hilltop of Kokino (both the city and the sanctuary are situated in Upper Macedonia, today Republic of Macedonia).

¹² *Stob*, *stolb*, *stub* – 'pillar, column' in plain Macedonian.



Above: the stone throne remnants of the chthonic Great Mother Goddess sanctuary and astrological observatory on the hilltop of Kokino in Republic of Macedonia, 3rd millennium BCE

Volkert Haas described the 'mountain mother': "*The belief of the great mountain queen was known in the Near East, as well in the whole Mediterranean and in areas of Eurasia. The mistress of the mountain is just a form of the Mother Goddess, who is manifesting herself in the throne realm of a mountain. The location of the mountain top as a throne for the goddess is of a latter development.*¹³ *First the mountain, the throne and the goddess were united in one. From the sky the Stormgod connect himself with the earth mother at the mountain. The mountain itself or the goddess sitting on the mountain forms the earth mother, who is receiving the rain god.*" She ruled over wild beasts, and was also a 'bee goddess'.

Because *Cybele* presided over mountains and fortresses, her crown was in the form of a city wall – CORONA MURALIS in Latin. And accordingly, she became the protector of the city walls and cities in general.

Recent excavations at the ancient holy locality of "Tsarevi Kuli" (Kings Towers) near Strumitsa in R. of Macedonia, brought to daylight a scoop of some 30 feminine

¹³ as later Macedonic-Phrygian *Kibela/Cybele/Kubaba* in Asia Minor.

statuettes of the Great Mother Goddess Kibela (i.e. *Cybele*), some of which resilient to the 5th millennium BCE. She appears with mural crown and veil, seated on a throne or in a chariot, drawn by two lions. Most of the other artifacts of her are found in the ancient town of Stobi, at Novoselani near Prilep, Isar-Marvinci, not far from Valandovo, etc.

Numerous statuettes of Cybele show that the cult of the goddess was largely present in the Paionian¹⁴ territory. When the Macedonian *Brygians* from northern regions of Pelagonia plain migrated to Asia Minor, where in the 7-6th century BCE they became known as *Phrygians*, they also brought with them the worship of the Great Mother Goddess *Cybele/Kibela*. The Macedonic Brygian/Phrygian worship of *Cybele* and her consort *Attis* included the annual celebration of mysteries on the return of the spring season. Along with her consort Cybele was worshipped in wild, emotional, orgiastic ceremonies. At Cybele's annual festival on March 24 (the New Year eve of ancient Macedonic calendar), her chief priest drew gifts and offers to the music of cymbals, drums, and flutes. The cult ritual of Cybele was directed by eunuch priests called *Corybantes*, who led the faithful in orgiastic rites accompanied by wild cries and the frenzied music of flutes, drums, and cymbals.

These ritual traditions were also passed on and attributed to the *Maenads*¹⁵ and the worship of yet another Macedonic deity, *Dionysus*. They presided over sexually-based fertility cult, where the designation 'fertility' allowed to these predominantly male societies to dismiss the supreme role of the Mother Goddesses in ancient religions.

Much later, when adopted by the predacious Romans, the Dionysiac cult was re-adapted and transformed into 'Roman festival of *Bacchus*',¹⁶ and its worshipers and festivities were renamed into *Bachanaliens*.

¹⁴ Upper Macedonia; along the river Vardar valley, today mostly in Republic of Macedonia.

¹⁵ A term given to women under the ecstatic spell of Dionysus.

¹⁶ *Bacchus*, another name for Dionysus.

The Great Mother Goddess Historical Artifacts



Above: Macedonian bronze sacramental statuette of Macedonic-Paionian/Phrygian goddess Kibela (Kubaba, Cybele) on a cart pulled by two lions, 4/3rd century BCE (only small part of the 2nd century BCE Roman plunder from Macedonia, today in Metropolitan Museum as part of the much recent WW2 American plunder from Italy)

Next page: another (older) terracotta statuette of the same goddess from the 6th century BCE, with tambourine (or sun-disc) and flanked by two lions, part of 30 feminine statuettes scoop, some of which resilient to the 5th millennium BCE, found recently at the ancient Paionian holy locality of "Tsarevi Kuli" (Kings Towers) near Strumitsa, Republic of Macedonia.





Above: **terracotta sacramental statuette from Isar Marvinci of the Macedonic-Paionian/Phrygian goddess Kibela (Kubaba, Cybele) with only one left of her two lions, from the Macedonic Period 4/3rd century BCE**

Study of the Cybele bronze, marble, and terracotta statuettes shows that at the time of the early Macedonic Period the cult of this goddess was omnipresent in the Paionian territory too. During this period the goddess was largely worshipped in the ancient town of 'Isar' at Marvinci. The great number of statues suggests that there was an important temple devoted to Cybele. In addition to marble statues, which were brought from the nearby marble query at city of Prilep, local craftsmen also made terracotta and other material statues for gift purposes.

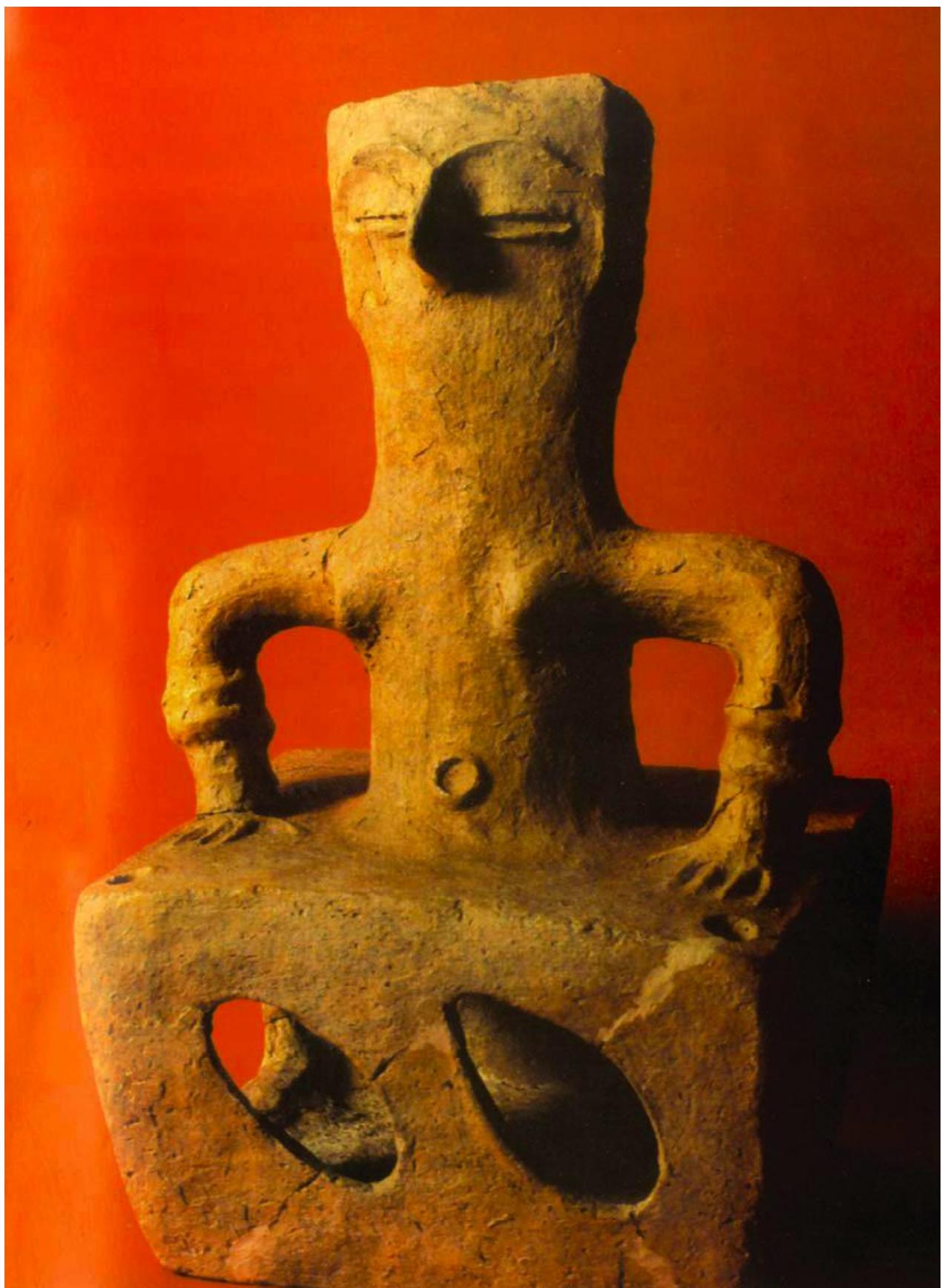
Her identification by the Romans with the goddesses *Maia*, *Juno* (e.g. Etruscan *Uni*), *Rhea*, etc. further contributed to the establishment of her worship on a firm ground. By the end of the Roman Republic it had attained prominence, and beside Dionis and Mitra under the empire it became one of the most important non-Roman cults in the Roman world.

In all of her aspects, Prehistoric, Pelasgo-Macedonic-Brygian/Phrygian and/or Paionian, Hittite-Maionian, Etruscan, Roman, etc. – the Great Mother Goddess was characterized by essentially the same qualities. She was depicted by her universal motherhood as the great parent not only of gods but also of plants, animals, human beings, and as mistress of their homes.



**Above: coin of the Great Mother Goddess of the mountain tops
i.e. cities, from Smyrna, Asia Minor, 2nd century BCE**

Numerous traditions delivered from the cult of the Great Mother Goddess survived and arrived until our days. The prehistoric Matriarchate left deep and ineradicable traces in the culture of Macedonia. Reshaped and renamed million times, she finally transformed during the Christianity into the cult of Holy Mary, mother of Jesus. Her primordial identity and heritage is preserved even today, and after more than 8000 years she is still, although incognito, the patron-saint of the modern city of Skopje, capital of Republic of Macedonia.



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